HONORABLE MEN

OF THE BIBLE

ADULT

The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

HONORABLE MEN OF THE BIBLE

Vacation Bible School Lessons for ADULT
Written by Brother Danny Hayes

Table of Contents

HUMILITY AND PATIENCE 4
HONESTY AND INTEGRITY 13
FAITH AND WISDOM 20
ZEALOUSNESS AND LEADERSHIP . . . 27
COURAGE AND OBEDIENCE 33

Chairman:
Brother Rick Williams

Chairman Elect:
Brother Rick Williams

Contributing Editors:
Elder Mitch Glasscock
Elder Jerry Miller
Elder David Swindle
Elder Todd Fugate

Proofreaders:
Sister Laura Beavers
Sister Megan Carter
Brother Danny Hayes
Brother Randall Henson
Sister Casey Rouse
Sister Deborah Williams
Brother Rick Williams

Booklet Design and Layout:
Brother Cory Glass

Written and published under the authority of Mount Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church

In Cooperation with Fairview Memorial Missionary Baptist Church, Faith Missionary Baptist Church, and Old Union Missionary Baptist Church

Price Per Booklet: $1.60

Treasurer
Brother Randall Henson
10022 Woodburn-Allen Springs Rd.
Alvaton, KY 42122
270-842-4526

ALL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES ARE TAKEN FROM KING JAMES VERSION

©2015 Missionary Baptist Bible School Literature/ Mount Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church

LESSON ONE

HUMILITY AND PATIENCE

LESSON TEXT
1 Timothy 6:11

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

How do you define a real man? There are many definitions and which one you get depends upon where you are looking for the definition. If you watch western movies, you'll soon get a very clear idea of what the writers have in mind for a picture of a real man. If you watch an action movie, you'll get a somewhat different idea. If you look at fitness magazines, you'll see an ideal based upon physical attributes and perhaps athletic skills. If you look at Men's fashion magazines, you'll see perhaps more genteel traits depicted. Depending upon your source(s), you may come away with some pretty warped ideas about what constitutes a real man.

We are constantly bombarded with messages about everything from what we read, what we watch, what we listen to, and what we see in the world around us. We are exposed to all kinds of ideas from our friends and acquaintances, employers, co-workers, commercials, stores we visit, sports we watch, and the list goes on. Anybody or anything that we give our attention to is sending us their ideas about everything. Thinking about this, it's easy to understand the importance of actively filtering the ideas that are reaching us. This is something that we do without really thinking. If we see a product in a commercial that we have no need for, we tune it out. It doesn't matter if it's the greatest product of its kind - we simply don't listen.

But what about things that are much more important than a tabletop oven that can cook a chicken in half the time without getting hot? Do we take notice of the fact that we are literally being preached to and expend the effort to determine if the subject is worthy of our consideration? What if a movie is actually putting forth an ideal of what a man should be? Do we evaluate that ideal to determine if we should consider it? To go to a ridiculous extreme, what if the ideal put forth is that a real man takes drugs and beats his wife? The point of using such an example is to point out that most of us wouldn't even consider adding that to our idea of a real man, but what about things that are more subtle? What if our movie real-man is for the most part a decent guy, but he takes moral liberties, like perhaps making an obscene gesture to his boss. This might be shown in a positive light, like his boss is unfair and he's doing this as a symbol of his independence and fighting injustice. But is that really part of what being a real man is all about?

Whether we like to admit it or not, we are all affected by things like this, especially if we don't have the proper filters in place. If we don't already have a strong 'real-man' picture in our mind, we can be influenced by these positive portrayals of negative things.

So where do we go to form a correct image of what a man really should be? Believe it or not, there are some real-world examples out there that depict a real man, but you won't find a full picture in one place. The reason is that none of us gets it right. A man may display a trait of a real man at one moment and then completely disappoint the next. But there is a standard to which we have access. God's word is available to us for instruction. Who would know better what a man should be than the One who actually made man in the first place? The Bible is His instruction manual for being a man as well as being a human. In the Bible are not only instructional passages, but stories of men that teach by example. Most of the men that are given to us as examples will disappoint if we follow them far enough through the scriptures, because they were human and didn't get it right 100% of the time either. But the ones who truly followed God - even in short bursts - would sometimes rise to a high level, showing us one or more traits associated with what God intended a man to be.

In these lessons, we will look at men whose stories are told in the Bible. However, we should keep in mind that the traits that we will be looking at - not an exhaustive list, but some very important ones - are not unique to men. If you take the time to review last year's lessons in which we focused on women, you will see some of the very same traits talked about. But when you study and compare the women in last year's lessons to the men in this year's lessons for the same traits, you may notice that the way the traits were manifested between men and women could sometimes be different, especially in the time that they lived. While going through these lessons, it may be of value to sometimes consider these differences, both in terms of the time of the people studied and in terms of the world that we live in. We need to remember that real character doesn't have gender any more than it has specific size, shape, race, or ethnicity. It can and should be common to us all. However, character calls upon us to act according to our different abilities which can be different between the sexes. You may then see differences between last year's lessons and this year's.

As we grew up, most of us developed an image of the person that we wanted to become. We may have given up on achieving that goal on many occasions when the going got tough, but we still had that image. It may have been revised many times as we learned more - right or wrong - about what an adult should be, but the image was there. As we go through our lessons, we will try to use these traits like building blocks to "build" a real man. As we go, we'll stop and take a look at our man to see how he's looking - to see if he's looking like the man we have in our head.

Further, while the man in our head is about how we want to be, we also have things in our head that are more about what we want to achieve, to acquire, to have. We all have goals and there's nothing wrong with having them. There are immediate goals - those things that we want to achieve in the next few

days or even weeks. There are mid-range goals - those things that we are looking to achieve perhaps in the next year or so. Then there are long-term goals. You could call them ultimate goals or life-goals.

Achievement of all of these goals depends very much upon the kind of person we are or become. A person with no resolve or tenaciousness will probably not achieve much in the way of goals and indeed may not have very ambitious goals in the first place. At the same time, the kinds of goals we have and achieve have a heavy influence upon the kind of person that we become. A man who reaches his goal of a hike across America will emerge from the finished hike a very different person than the one who began the walk.

So you see, the man in our head, if he comes out, will have a direct effect upon the goals we set and even upon the setting or re-setting of those goals. It is vitally important that the man in our head and the goals that we set be in harmony. It wouldn't make sense to desire to be a man of sterling character and yet have a goal of scamming elderly people out of their money. Either the man in the head must change the goal or the goal will change the man in the head.

So what are our goals? To be rich? To be famous? To have peace of mind? To have love? Maybe a trip to Europe? Let's begin building our man with the traits that God Himself has given us in His word and see how compatible this man is with our life-goals.

Humility

Noun: the quality or condition of being humble; modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc. - From dictionary.com

What is the rightful order of things between a human being and a worm? How can we compare the two? Can the worm rightfully challenge the human in any meaningful way? Consider the vastness of the human body compared to the miniscule worm. Which is more powerful? Which is more intelligent? Which is more creative? The human, to a huge degree is superior to the worm. Do we have power over the worm? Can we crush it simply on a whim? Can we save it from the sidewalk after it rains and put it in a place where it will live and thrive? Of course, we have great power over the worm. What can the worm do for us? What can it do to us? Nothing? Is there any reason that we should be mindful of the worm? No reason of any consequence. So if it were possible, what should be the worm's attitude toward us? It certainly has no right to take a pugnacious attitude with us. It has no right to dictate terms to us. The worm would do well to admit its inferiority, to appeal to us for our favor, to try to be friends with us, wouldn't it?

This is a very inadequate picture of us compared to God. There are differences. God can span the heavens with His hand. We are, comparatively, specks of dust. Comparing God to us in size, power, intelligence - every conceivable measure, there is no discernible reason that He should even take note of us. Knowing this, what should be our attitude toward God?

Of course, we don't know this. At least we don't acknowledge it. It's not in our nature to acknowledge God as He is and us as we are. We are born to be stubborn, willful, self-absorbed creatures who have a positive bias toward defying God. A terrible attitude to be sure, especially considering that God created us. Of course, He didn't create us like this. We became like this of our own accord. We put our own will before God's and became the creatures that we are today.

But look at the real picture. He did create us. He has the power to destroy us. How would a reasonable man approach Him? Consider Abraham's actions when God appeared to Him through three of His angels: "And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground" (Genesis 18:2). Abraham humbled himself before God's messengers. How much more so would his attitude be to God Himself?

God is pleased with humility from men because it reflects a recognition of the true order of things. A real man will recognize the reality of God's great power and glory and humble himself before it. The reasons for this are well documented.

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus told a parable regarding two men. Both of these men went to the temple to pray at the same time. No other similarities were given, because there were none concerning what Jesus was talking about. One was a Pharisee, a man of a religious sect that believed that they could and did follow God's Law perfectly and therefore needed no salvation from God. Pharisees tended toward thinking that they were morally superior, nobler, and generally better than the rest of humanity. The other man was a publican - a tax collector. Publicans were not known for their moral excellence. They tended to become rich at the expense of the general public because many were known to exact more in taxes than had been levied, keeping the excess. As you might expect, these men were loathed by society at large.

Also, as you might expect from the description of him, the Pharisee prayed a prayer that was more or less reminding God how good he was. Jesus even said that the man prayed with himself, the suggestion being that he was focused on himself more than God. Given his belief of his own perfection, you might wonder why he felt he needed to pray at all, but then following the Law perfectly required that he do it. Pharisees made a practice of praying aloud and making a large show of it in order to establish their righteousness with those around them. Not only did this man tell God of his own perfection, but he emphasized it by pointing out the imperfection of others, including the publican, probably also out loud.

In contrast, Jesus painted a very different picture of the publican. He stood far away, implying that he did not consider himself worthy to approach near to where the Pharisee did. He hit himself on the

breast, obviously the center of his pain. His heart was pained, being in agony of the spirit. His only prayer was an earnest begging that God would be merciful to him. Some might wonder if he was feeling guilt for having taken the livelihood of so many people. Some might think that he had committed many more sins than those thefts. It is much more reasonable that he sought forgiveness from God for all. He had obviously become convinced of God's awesome greatness and his own pitiful lack in comparison. Remember the worm? He had realized that he was the worm. When he reached that point, he saw it. He became humble because he saw that he was in a humble condition. He didn't care how he looked in relation to the Pharisee because he was more concerned with how he looked in relation to God. He didn't care who saw or heard him because he was consumed with God looking down and hearing him.

Jesus concluded the parable by saying that only the publican was justified that day. To be justified by God is to be saved from the consequences of sin. He then told why. He said that anyone who exalts themselves will be made low and anyone who humbles themselves will be lifted up.

Humility and the Real Man

But is a man to only humble himself when he is faced with God? Can he actually meet the definition of humility above only being humble when he's before God? One question to be asked here is: Is there any time when any of us aren't before God? Another point to be made is one made by the Apostle Peter : *"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5).*

Abraham understood the need to be clothed in humility. Not only did he submit to God, but to his fellow man as well. As he and his nephew Lot traveled together as he was following God to a land that had been given to him, they both became rich with cattle, so much so that the land could not sustain both of their herds. This was causing trouble between the herdsmen for both men as they found themselves competing for scarce resources, each set trying to take care of their employers' herds by what means possible.

Abraham, who was named Abram at that time, knew that unless someone backed down, there could be hard feelings and possibly even open warfare between he and Lot and between their servants. Abram, clothed in this humility as he was, settled the matter by submitting himself to his nephew. *"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Genesis 13: 8-9).*

Of course Lot accepted such a generous offer. Abram wasn't bowing to Lot because he was more

powerful. As Genesis 13 describes it, Abram was the richer of the two, his riches described as including gold and silver where Lot seemed to have only cattle and tents. Abram's camp was a powerful army as we see in Genesis 14 where they rescued Lot and his goods and liberated Sodom and the cities of the plain from four powerful kingdoms. Abram certainly didn't have to submit to Lot. He did it because he did not want to have conflict with him. In fact, from Abrams character, we can surmise that he only went to war with the kings in order to rescue Lot. Abram was a man of peace as a humble man will be. Not just before God, but before everyone else as well.

So this humility is to become a lifestyle for us, just like the clothes that we wear. We wear clothes almost all the time and when we don't, it's for a necessary reason, like bathing. And when we finish bathing, what comes right afterwards? As Abram did with his humility after defeating the kings, we put clothes back on. We don't go without clothes. Really, when you think about the definition of humility, it's really not possible to have a "modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc." just part of the time, is it? Humility is not something that you can just turn off and on. You are either humble or you're not.

It's important to remember that humility is not an end unto itself. "Humility" can be an expression of narcissism when a person is so focused on being humble that he loses sight of anything that he might accomplish. Humility is a means. Isaiah quoted God, saying that He dwells with the humble and revives their spirit (Isaiah 57:15). James said that God will lift up the man who is humble (James 4:10). So God actually favors the humble man. Who, realizing who God really is, would not want the favor of God? So humility is not a goal. It is a means to a goal of gaining the favor of God.

Reach for Humility

The world around us doesn't like humility because it doesn't realize who God really is. When you see men portrayed in TV or movies, or explained by folks wrapped up in the world, you don't get humility. Sure, sometimes you'll see a portrayal of something that's supposed to be humility, but it's usually presented as a way to have the hero come out on top in day to day situations. Not to say that these things can't happen, but that's not the goal of true humility.

No person ever became humble by deciding to do so. You can't be humble by trying to be humble. It's like the proverbial fistful of sand. The tighter you grasp it, the more of it slips through your fingers. Humility, like all Godly traits, flows from a desire for a closer relationship with God. A person drawing closer to God, whether in seeking salvation or in seeking to add to salvation, will perceive the reality of the glory of God and the lowness of their humanity and will be humbled. The moment a person turns their focus from God to their humility, they have lost it because they have turned from its source.

So our real man isn't humble because he has worked at being humble. He's humble because he has and is seeking God and righteousness. Just like the publican at the temple. Just like Abraham when meeting God's messengers. Just like Abram when keeping peace with Lot. Humility was not on their minds. Only God.

Patience

Patience is a big subject that covers a lot of ground and there are few in our world today that even understand what it really is, much less those who actually have it. It is a virtue that God expects His people to have and use, so it would behoove us to study it well. In chapter one of Peter's second letter, he gives us the building blocks of something that we use a big word for (sanctification), but all it is, is just the building of a mature Christian life (2 Peter 1:5-8). Patience is something that we need to add to our lives in order to continue growing as we should.

The important thing is that we don't wait until we need it to add it. Just as a concert pianist doesn't wait until the day of his first concert to start learning how to play the piano, we can't wait until we are faced with a need for patience to start trying to acquire it. As with the piano, practice makes perfect.

But in order to practice it, we need to really know what it is. There are a lot of conceptions of patience out there. Some are right and some aren't. Perhaps we can define patience by looking at things that aren't really it:

- Bearing something for the sake of bearing it isn't patience because there is no point to it. Patience is directed toward a specific end.
- Putting up with something because you don't have any control over it isn't patience. That's just fatalistic. Patience is aimed toward overcoming.
- Passively letting something happen is not patience. Patience is an active virtue.
- Shutting something out is not patience. That's just pretending it's not there. Patience does not ignore a problem.
- Being easy-going isn't patience. Easy-going is just not letting something bother you. Patience is only present where there is trouble, discomfort.
- Lack of complaint isn't patience. What defines patience is where the complaint is taken and what the intent behind making the complaint would be.

In the New Testament, there are three Greek words that are translated as patience: Makrothumia – literally "long temper", prosdechomai - "wait", and hupomone – literally "stay under" meaning to abide under trouble. These all find themselves in the teachings that we have for patience. In his letter, James said in 1:19, *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:".* In Galatians 5:5, we read *"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."* In his second letter to Timothy, Paul exhorted him and us to *"therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:3).*

Slow to Wrath

Patience isn't just swallowing our anger. It is delaying it. Remember that patience isn't just the lack of complaint. It is the constructive management of the cause of discomfort. We have people around us all the time. With social media, we have the capability to be in what amounts to a large room full of people around the clock. Many of us interact quite often with others and if you look around, you'll notice that there is almost always some kind of conflict. That's what we do. We're all really good at the conflict thing. The reason is that we all have our own separate wills and there are very few of these wills that are in sync. In fact, some of our wills are actually in opposition to each other.

With such a situation, it is just a matter of time before a collision takes place. When this happens, we must practice not holding our tongue (although that is a good practice), but practice holding our anger. This is saying "I will not give place to my anger right now." It isn't swallowing it, but holding it. You may have valid reason to be angry, but you hold it anyway. Why? How often does God have reason to be angry with us? We fail Him many times daily, but He is longsuffering – long tempered – with us. This is not without a reason. It is constructive. If He poured out His anger on us every time that we deserved it, we would be consumed and never be able to repent.

Additionally, it isn't just wrath. Frustration, judgment, despair, isolation, and many other very human reactions should be slowed by patience. Our desire should be, as Paul stated, *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Romans 12:18)*

Wait

As with wrath, if we wait upon the Lord, He will make things right. Waiting is the hardest thing for some of us. We can't sit still. "Do something, even if it's wrong" seems to be the motto. How many things have been done wrongly when the Lord did not act in our estimation of the proper time and we went our own way and followed our own minds? It is altogether good and proper for us to wait. How long should we wait?

Before He ascended to Heaven, Jesus told His disciples to tarry "... in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." So was it okay for them to give up and try to make things happen themselves if it didn't happen in a week? No, they were supposed to wait for as long as it took. This is patience.

A wonderful promise for those who wait: *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)* There are many more like this, but try as you might, you won't find a positive promise for those that try to strike out and go their own way after they think they've waited long enough.

Endure

Why are we to endure? We are to endure because we recognize that this life is not the end of our existence; because we understand

that nothing good comes from ease and pleasure; because we know that we deserve no good thing – an outgrowth of humility. We are to endure because we know that *"his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalms 30:5)*

Endurance is a natural result of waiting upon God. You really can't have one without the other. There have been many people who have endured much without faith in God, but to what end? God was not glorified. He was not lifted up for the people to see His great power and love. A man may accomplish great things in this world all on his own, but then what? He dies. Our God is forever and He is a comforter of those who endure for His sake.

Job

Job is recognized as a man of great patience. He endured hardship that most of us can probably not even imagine. However, it is not just his endurance that marks him as truly patient. Many people say that they don't know how people can live through great troubles without God and yet many millions of people do live through struggles that many of us will never know. We can't say that Job didn't complain because he did. He regretted the very day that he was born.

Yet through all of his mourning, Job clung to God. He did not question God's right to allow all the misfortune to befall him. In fact, upon hearing of his great losses, Job, in his mourning, worshiped God saying "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21) In his great mourning, he was taking his complaint to God, who was the only one who could help him. He asked that God take his life from him to relieve his suffering, but did not presume to take his own life.

Job needed answers and knew where they needed to come from. When his "friends" badgered him, looking for some secret sin in him that would be the cause of his great trouble, Job knew that he had not sinned against God. Job waited for an answer from God. He did not shrug his shoulders when the answer was delayed and then come up with his own theories, or accept those of his friends. He waited, and finally, at a time of His choosing, God did answer him, chiding him where he needed chiding and giving him answers where he needed them.

The Real Man as He Relates to Humility and Patience

The real man will certainly have humility, but not the prideful kind where he shines it up to display it before everyone. His humility will be the quiet kind that comes from knowing his rightful place in God's creation. He should desire to humble himself before God and to not attempt to exalt himself above other men. Because of his humility, he will practice patience by forbearing others and waiting upon God, enduring until he is helped by the almighty.

In our next lesson, Honesty and Integrity.

LESSON TWO

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

LESSON TEXT
PROVERBS 20:7

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

As we continue building our man in this lesson, let's think some more about the kind of person that we want him to be. As he tries to make his way in this world, how important is it that he be taken seriously? How important is it that he be trusted? How important is it that he be believed? Some people don't consider these things terribly important, but think about the implications here. What if you needed someone to believe you, like if you were being accused of something that you hadn't done? If people didn't feel like they could believe you, you might have to live with the consequences for that uncommitted wrong deed. Or if you were witness to an event of some importance – good or bad? You might not be able to convince anyone. Or if you needed a loan for a business venture? You might have to miss an opportunity because no one is willing to take a risk on you.

The fact is that how people view us determines to a large degree how seriously they take us, how willing they are to believe us or to take a risk on us. And how they view us is determined to a large degree on our character. Our character is not just what we are right now, but how we have been. It is the sum of our lives. Others' perception of us has a great deal to do with how they have known us to be in the past. A man who is believed is a man who has shown himself to be believable. A man who is trusted is a man who has shown himself to be trustworthy.

Our character is shaped in very small increments over many years. It is the sum of all the little battles that we fight with ourselves over the question of doing what is right vs. doing what is our nature. Robert Brault said "You do not wake up one morning a bad person. It happens by a thousand tiny surrenders of self-respect to self-interest." By the same token, you don't suddenly decide that you're going to develop good character. It comes as a result of constantly acting on your desires after working to make sure your desires are the correct ones.

Character in the positive sense is defined as "moral or ethical quality; qualities of honesty, courage, or the like; integrity" - dictionary.com. Two of those qualities we are studying in this lesson: Honesty and Integrity.

Honesty – truthfulness, sincerity, or frankness.
Integrity - adherence to moral and ethical principles;soundness of moral character; honesty.

As you can see, each definition is so close to the other as to be taken as almost the same thing. You

might think of integrity as “honesty plus” or “honesty in action”. These two traits are the backbone of good character. They will cause a man to be held in high esteem by most people and carry him through many a hard day.

Joseph

Very few men are better life-long examples of these two traits than Joseph. Joseph’s story is told in Genesis chapters 37 – 40, where there is also mention of a flash of integrity by another person.

Joseph was the eleventh of twelve sons of Jacob and was quite a bit younger than his oldest brothers. He was born to Jacob’s favorite wife Rachel, which caused him to be favored by Jacob over his brothers, which in turn caused his older brothers to hate him. Only his younger brother Benjamin loved him. With such a gap in these relationships, it may not be that surprising that Joseph was perhaps willing to prod back at them. When God sent him dreams that suggested that his brothers and even his parents would bow in obeisance to him at some point, he had no hesitation in telling them. It’s true that Joseph was being honest in the telling, but it rankled the others. Even Jacob rebuked Joseph for sharing it, though he took note of it, but the brothers hated him all the more.

Their hate was so intense that most of them plotted to kill Joseph. Only Reuben, who stalled them by convincing them to throw Joseph into a pit so that he could rescue him later, and Judah, who convinced them to sell Joseph to slave traders, prevented his death at the hands of the rest of his brothers. To cover themselves, all the brothers dipped his coat in the blood of a goat and concocted a story for their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast.

The slave traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, an Egyptian of high rank in the Pharoah’s service and obviously quite wealthy. It didn’t take long for Potiphar to see how God had blessed Joseph and caused him to prosper in whatever situation he found himself. He turned over the operation of his house to Joseph and the results were that God increased his wealth greatly for Joseph’s sake. Joseph had shown himself so worthy of his master’s trust that Potiphar turned the management of his household completely over to him. It was to the point that Potiphar no longer knew what he had other than the food that he ate. He only knew that Joseph was taking care of it all and that was good enough for him because of the trust that he knew he had well placed in Joseph.

As we know, happily ever after doesn’t really exist in this life. There are those who have reached a place in life where the sublime seems to have come to stay only to have turmoil appear suddenly. Sometimes it is trouble they have earned. Sometimes it is temptation along with the trouble as came upon Job, who had done nothing wrong. You can be sure that in these times, God is our refuge. Joseph trusted on God, even

when temptation threatened to overtake him. Potiphar’s wife tried to convince Joseph to lie with her, but he did not hesitate or waver. He refused her and gave his reasons as not wanting to violate his master’s great trust in him or more importantly, sin against God. She kept after him for days, and for days he refused her until one day, when she caught him alone, she grabbed his garment and held it as he ran away from her, keeping it with her. Realizing that she had no chance with him, she used the garment as a means for revenge, offering it as evidence of her false accusation of him having attempted to assault her.

Potiphar, as people will often do, believed his lying wife over Joseph, who had proven himself so trustworthy. He had Joseph thrown into prison and left there. There is no evidence that he would have ever been released. But Joseph had retained his integrity and God was on his side. Romans 8:31 says *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* Joseph is a great example of that. Joseph immediately found favor with the prison keeper, who soon used his integrity to help him in running the prison. In fact, soon the prison keeper had completely turned the oversight of the prisoners over to Joseph and God caused him to once again prosper in a different role.

God’s favor helped Joseph to such an extent that he eventually was made by the Pharoah himself to be second in command of Egypt. Due to God helping him interpret the Pharoah’s dreams (which God had sent him) and wise use of the country’s resources, Joseph helped Egypt to not only ride out a severe famine in the region, but to become the hope for starving people everywhere. Because of Joseph, the Pharoah’s power and influence at that time became absolute in Egypt and great among the countries that surrounded it. People came from everywhere to buy grain, of which Egypt had plenty.

Among the people who went to buy grain were all of Joseph’s brothers except for Benjamin, who Jacob had kept with him for fear of losing his only remaining son from Rachel. When they came to buy grain, Joseph saw and recognized them, though they did not recognize him as he had made himself strange to them, possibly through the use of Egyptian clothes, hairstyles, and cosmetics. He even communicated to them through an interpreter, hiding the fact that he knew the Hebrew language. Through the interpreter, he accused them of being spies and when they told about themselves and their younger brother who was not with them, he demanded that they verify their story by bringing the young man to him. He determined to hold one of them prisoner until they returned and so Simeon stayed in the prison in Egypt to ensure their return. He also said that he would not sell them more grain without seeing their baby brother.

Unbeknownst to the brothers, Joseph could understand them as they talked among themselves. He

heard them repenting of the sin that they had committed against him all those years before. He heard them lament that they had not listened to his earnest pleading not to do to him what they had done. Hearing this, he wept privately. His tears were no doubt those of pain, but also hope in that his brothers were in a condition to perhaps be restored to him. He continued his ploy by binding Simeon before them and sending the rest of them back home with their grain, never once letting on that he was this long-lost brother that they mourned over.

When the brothers returned home, they told Jacob of their predicament, and sought to take Benjamin with them back to Egypt, but Jacob would have none of it, fearing to lose the only remaining son he had from his beloved Rachel. And so the situation remained until they had used all the grain that they had brought back from Egypt. They were again approaching dire straights and had to do something. After Judah vowed to stand as surety for Benjamin, Jacob relented, seeing that they would all die without food.

They returned taking double money for the grain and gifts of the best that they had – balm, honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds. When they appeared before Joseph, he had them brought to his house to eat with him and be reunited with Simeon. They went there, still not realizing who he was, and presented him with their gifts. Though it was difficult for Joseph to hold himself back, he did not reveal his real identity because he yet had a plan.

He instructed his servants to prepare their sacks of grain, putting their money back into the sacks and to put his silver cup into Benjamin's sack. He had his men follow the brothers as they returned and to stop them and accuse them of theft. The brothers, confident that they were not guilty, offered to let the one die in whose sack the stolen goods were found and to let the rest of them be servants of Joseph. When Joseph's men opened Benjamin's sack, there was the cup as they had left it. Of course the brothers were dumbfounded and horrified, ripping their clothes – an outward show of grief.

Judah's Moment of Integrity

When brought before Joseph, he asked them how they thought they could get away with doing this to a man with his insight. He declared that he would keep Benjamin as his servant and send the rest of them home. Then Judah came forward and pled for Benjamin's release. He told of how the loss of Benjamin would be of great harm to his father, the grief killing him. He begged for Benjamin's release by telling of how he offered himself as surety for the boy's return. Finally, he begged to be able to take Benjamin's place, to see his family no more in return for the lad being sent home to his father. He said, *"For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." (Genesis 44:34).*

Joseph's Integrity is Revealed

Joseph could no longer hide himself and cleared the room of everyone but he and his brothers. Then weeping, he revealed himself to them. The brothers were shocked of course, but when they finally understood the situation, they were troubled. Here was their brother, whom they had threatened with death and then sold into slavery, and who had somehow, no matter how improbable, become a very great and powerful man. His power was such that he could have them all executed and then have their families rounded up and cut to pieces and nobody would question his authority to do so. He could do it with impunity.

However, sensing their fear, Joseph quickly began trying to put their minds at ease. He told them, *"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. " (Genesis 45:5-13).*

Thinking About Joseph and These Traits

Joseph of course had had a lot of time to pray and meditate over the events of the past and could see not only the evil that his brothers had done to him, but also the good purpose that God had in allowing him to be carried away. He saw that his fate had been to prepare a way for his people to survive. He saw that the unpleasantness that he had gone through was a necessary thing to bring about what God wanted. Perhaps most importantly, he put God's purposes ahead of his own. This is a measure of integrity – the desire to see God's will, which is equal to what is right, done no matter the cost.

There is more yet to Joseph's story, however. When he was actually going through all the trouble that he had, he still put himself firmly in God's hands. He maintained his integrity. He did not become

the person that the world tried to make him become. How we react when the world knocks us around says a lot about our character. Do we complain? Do we get angry? Do we try to protect ourselves by becoming hard? Are we tempted to just quit trying?

Think about Joseph and how he reacted and what happened to him as a result. It's true that we don't know about his immediate reactions, but we can see what he did. When he became a servant to Potiphar, he prospered. When he was thrown in prison, he prospered. When he was made second-in-command in Egypt, he prospered. Why do you suppose this is? It's true that God blessed him greatly, but notice that Joseph worked. There is nothing said that he took a little while to get going or to be depressed or to sulk. It said that all he did prospered. Get that - "he did". Joseph kept his head up. He trusted God. He didn't let the knocks make him a different person. He didn't wait for God or anyone else to bring him success on a silver platter. He knew that his fate wasn't at the mercy of this world. He did what he was supposed to do and trusted God to do the rest.

What a blow it must have been to have been thrown in prison after having everything going so well! But Joseph remained himself, retained his integrity, kept going, and bloomed where he was planted. To the Church at Philippi, Paul said *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phillipians 4:11-13).* Adversity did not change Joseph. He abounded because he sought the strength only given by God.

Yet in addition to adversity, Joseph was not changed by success either. In the house of Potiphar, he had become the CEO of what must have been a large operation. In running the house of a wealthy person, he was surely surrounded by the trappings of success. Many people in this situation might come to expect that perhaps the normal rules don't apply to them. They may become morally lax and succumb to temptations that come their way. Joseph was presented with such a thing and yet he turned it down cold. He was not consumed with thoughts of self-interest, but with a basic sense of right and wrong. He could not take his master's wife because that would be sin, but the thought of wronging a man who had dealt with him so generously was also repugnant to him.

At the height of his power over the land of Egypt, Joseph could have used that power to take revenge upon those who had wronged him. Let's face it - how many times have we thought of those who have wronged us and fantasized over being in a position to wreak havoc upon them. We've all been wronged from time to time. We

deal with people. It could have been inadvertent or malicious, but people do wrong things to other people. It is natural to our flesh to desire revenge. But we're not supposed to give in to the flesh and Joseph knew this. He had spent much time making God's will his own desire. God's desire was that Jacob's house would be preserved. God loved Jacob's house. Having made God's desires his own, Joseph had similar desires. In seeking God's will, Joseph retained his integrity.

Judah's Shining Moment

If you study Judah's life, you won't be as impressed with his character as you would be with Joseph. He had flaws and gave in to them. He dealt deceitfully. While he persuaded his brothers not to kill Joseph, he also participated in selling him to the slave traders. But we see this one moment when he showed integrity by being true to his vow to his father. By being willing to sacrifice the rest of his life in order to keep his word, he showed not only integrity, but also love of what is right. Honesty and integrity are not required to make a vow. People make vows all the time. A wise man will not be impressed by the making of a vow. He will know that the keeping or breaking of a vow is the measure of a man's character, even for that one moment.

Judah, in this moment, showed that he was capable of being a real man. We aren't given much detail of Judah's life after this moment. Yet, there is an indication that he was placed above his older brothers – Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, who had all shown less character – when Jacob chose him to go before them into Egypt and inform Joseph that Jacob's house was coming. The point is not to emphasize Judah's wrongs (we all have them), but to make the point that no matter what your past is, it is never too late to do the right thing. If we don't have a history of acting with honest and integrity, all we need to do to begin to acquire such a character is to do the right thing now, and try to do that in all of our nows going forward.

The Real Man as He Relates to Honesty and Integrity

The real man will have solid character. He will be true to his word and will not willingly suffer the wrong thing to be done. He will be served well by his honesty and integrity in that they put him in good stead with people who he deals with on any level. People respond well to these two traits because they give them a good foundation in their relationship with the real man. They know where they stand with him and know what to expect from him. They know that they can trust him to do them well in all their dealings. As a Christian, his life and actions speak well of his God, from whom he derives his character.

So far, our man is shaping up well. In the next lesson, we'll add faith and wisdom.

LESSON THREE

FAITH AND WISDOM

LESSON TEXT
Hebrews 11:1-3

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Faith is the first thing that we must acquire in our quest to become a real man, indeed, as a real human being. It is the thing that restores the relationship with God that was severed for all when the first of us decided to go his own way. It is what will begin to bring us back to what we were meant to be.

We as a race are broken. We were created perfect and upright in both body and spirit, but we chose to end that happy state. Rather than trust on God and His protection, we tried to be like Him on our own and failed miserably, creating a rift between Him and us. We ceased to be men as we were created to be and began to be what we are.

Though there was nothing guaranteeing it and certainly nothing in us that deserved it, God made a way for us to return to him because He loves us. The thing that is required of us is for us to let go of everything that we are and desire and to cling to Him, letting Him bring us back. This is faith and our coming back to God that it makes possible is called salvation. It is salvation from the consequences of the sin that we all inherit from Adam at the very beginning of our existence.

Prior to salvation, we are separated from God. It's true that God loves us all. It's true that He watches over and blesses who He will and that watch-care and those blessings can certainly extend to those who are unsaved. How many times has He protected all of us at a time when we were separated from Him. But even so, we had no relationship with Him.

When you were a child, you might ask for something from an adult that you knew and sometimes those adults may have even granted your request, but you really couldn't count on their favor, could you? But if you told your parents that you were hungry, or were in pain, or needed help or anything, you knew that they would listen to you and take care of you. You may not have gotten everything that you asked for, but you knew that they would look to your welfare. That's the difference between being someone's child and just being some other child.

It's also the difference between being God's child and not. A person who has been saved is God's child, adopted by Him. As such, he has a relationship with Him. He knows that God will actively look to his welfare. From such an advantageous position as this Father/child relationship is, he can begin adding things to his faith (2 Peter 2:5-8) – such things as we've already studied. And faith is the means to obtaining such a relationship. *For by grace are ye saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8).*

What is Faith, Really?

The current Merriam-Webster online edition defines faith in the following ways: *belief and trust in and loyalty to God; firm belief in something for which there is no proof; without question.* These definitions are pretty standard fare in the dictionary world of today.

Now let's look at the same word from the Webster's Dictionary of 1913: *Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting solely and implicitly on his authority and veracity; reliance on testimony; The belief in the facts and truth of the Scriptures, with a practical love of them; especially, that confiding and affectionate belief in the person and work of Christ, which affects the character and life, and makes a man a true Christian, -- called a practical, evangelical, or saving faith*.

Lastly, let's look at what Webster's had to say on the word in 1828: *Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith, is the assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God's testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will or approbation of the heart; an entire confidence or trust in God's character and declarations, and in the character and doctrines of Christ, with an unreserved surrender of the will to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God's testimony, and of the truth of the gospel, which influences the will, and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation.*

Notice the big change from 1828 to today? Why? Has the meaning of the word changed? Have we learned more? Are we smarter now than we were in 1828? Contrary to what you may have thought in fourth grade, dictionaries get their definitions from society, not the other way around. Dictionary publishers don't dictate definitions nearly so much as they chronicle them. If definitions always stayed the same, the dictionary publishers would have been out business a long time ago.

The good thing about having a dynamic language is that it can change to allow us to adequately describe the world we now live in, which in many, many cases is far different from the one of 1828. The bad thing is that we sometimes lose the original meaning of words, thereby losing the concept that they stood for. There are many things – often the most important things - that are no different now than they were 2000 years ago. People are still being born the same way. We still die the same way. We still love, still get angry, still sleep. The definitions of some of these change to address new things that we've learned about them. For instance, 2000 years ago, people probably didn't know about clinical death verses biological death, but the reality of death is still no different than it was then.

But in the definitions above we see some key points as to the meaning of faith changing over time. From 1828 to today, we see "*assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation*" change to "*belief in something for which there is no proof*". How can this be? Perhaps we should look to a source that hasn't changed over time.

In our lesson text, the Apostle Paul defines faith this way: "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" (Hebrews 11:1) Most of us who have been around church or Sunday school for very long have heard this verse read or quoted. But do we really know what Paul was saying in this verse? Let's parse it out.

He says faith is substance. What is substance? It's something concrete, real. Something that you can see and touch. So it's the concrete manifestation of things hoped for? That would mean that faith is being able to see and touch the things we hope for? But if you've got this kind of faith, you can't take it out and show it to others like you could show them your cellphone or your shoes. So how is it concrete? How is it real?

Let's say there's something that happened last week that really pleased you, maybe your child's team won a big game. You know that happened, don't you? Can you take that out of yourself and show it to someone else? You might tell them about it, but you can't show it. So is it real? Did it really happen? Of course it did. You know it happened. It's real. It's concrete to you even if nobody else saw it.

Now if faith is the concrete manifestation of things hoped for, it's the same thing. If you've got this, you don't have what we, in today's world, call hope. You have knowledge. You're not wishing for something. You have the satisfaction of having it by knowing that it's coming to you, even before you actually do have it. So we see that faith is really just knowledge. We can't take it out and show it to other people. We can only tell them what we know. Whether they believe us or not, it changes nothing - we still know.

The second half of Paul's statement says that faith is the "evidence of things not seen." The original greek word here is "elegchos". In contradiction to the modern definition of faith, it literally means proof. We all know what proof is, don't we? Dictionary.com says that it is "*evidence sufficient to establish a thing as true*". With this meaning, we see that faith proves things that we cannot see, to be true. With faith, we are given irrefutable proof. This is what Jesus was talking about when He told Thomas, who had doubted Jesus' resurrection, *"because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29).* He wasn't talking about blind acceptance. He was talking about faith, which is direct proof from God Himself.

From all of this we get that faith is the reality of things earnestly desired, the proof of things otherwise unprovable. Not either/or. It's both at the same time. So, as to the modern definition of faith, perhaps it appears to people with no faith that people of faith are believing without proof, but this is not the case. We see that faith, rather than today's popular concept of belief without proof, is really knowledge given to us directly by God. This knowledge is the one thing that cannot be taken from us because it is through the eternal part of us – our spirit.

David's Faith in Facing Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

In 1 Samuel chapter 17, we read of the young David, a short time after he had been anointed by Samuel to be the King of Israel after God had turned His back on King Saul for usurping the office of priest. The armies of Israel were gathered for battle against their nemesis the Philistines. Both sides were camped in opposition to each other on each side of the Valley of Elah, perhaps feeling each other out, perhaps just delaying.

Each day, Goliath, a mighty man of war and a giant came from the camp of the Philistines and defied Israel and her God. By some estimates he was over nine and a half feet tall, carried a spear that just the head weighed eighteen pounds, and armor that weighed over 250 pounds. He challenged Israel to send out a champion to fight him, the loser committing his entire nation to slavery to the winner's nation.

Naturally, with their leader having lost the favor of God and having no man to equal Goliath, the men of Israel hunkered down in fear. The situation remained like this for forty days, Goliath issuing the same challenge every morning and evening.

Meanwhile, Jesse, David's father, had sent David to the place of battle where his three oldest brothers were in order to take food to them and to see how they were doing. While there, David heard Goliath make his daily pitch and was greatly offended that a Philistine could defy Israel – and by extension, God - without being taken down. He began talking boldly that something must be done about this unacceptable situation. Apparently, there was nobody in Israel's camp that was talking this way, because once Saul heard about it, David was summoned to his tent.

There is no mention of beating around the bush. When David met with Saul, he matter-of-factly said *"Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." (v. 32)* There was no hesitation in David, only an attitude of determination as if to say "don't trouble yourself...I'll take care of this." You might think that David was being arrogant, but you'd be wrong. David was confident. Yet his confidence was not in himself.

When Saul pointed out that David was just a kid and that Goliath was a great and powerful warrior, David again did not hesitate to answer, showing Saul and everyone where his confidence lay. *"Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." (vv. 34-37)* How could David make such a statement? Was he being foolhardy, thinking "If I pull this off,

I'll be in the money and if I don't, I won't be alive to be ashamed"?

David was not being foolish. He was expressing his faith. He had been in situations where he had to put himself in harms way and had experienced the protection of God. He knew that God could and would protect him. In this case, he knew his cause was just. He knew that standing against God's enemy was the right thing to do. But even with all this, in saying "...he will deliver me...", he was expressing more than experience, more than belief. He KNEW. How could he possibly know? Because God made him to know. He knew because God had given him – not sometime in the past, but at that moment – the substance of things he expected and the proof of what he couldn't see. David trusted God and God provided him – His child – with what he needed.

Of course, we see that God didn't lie to David. He went with him. He guided the rock that David slung at the giant and brought him down. And there is no indication that there was ever any doubt in David as to this outcome. David's faith was not key to his protection or his motivation. That was God and His glory. But David's faith was the key to his assurance that God would be with him.

David's Faith in Preparing for the Temple (1 Chronicles 22:28)

Well into David's reign, God had given him and Israel rest from their enemies and it gave David a chance to look around at home. He expressed his dismay that although he lived in a palace, the ark of God still dwelt in a tent. He asked God to allow him to build a temple. God let David know that it was to be his son who would build a temple for God's ark to dwell in. God did, however, allow David to begin stockpiling supplies to be used in the building of the temple.

In 1 Chronicles chapter 22, David's gathering of these materials is described. He then showed his plans, which he had drawn up, to Solomon, who was to succeed him and who he charged with the building of the temple. He showed him the 100,000 talents of gold, the 1,000,000 talents of silver (a talent was about 75 lbs.), the iron and brass that they couldn't even measure, the cedar trees, and stone. He told him of the workmen that he had already arranged and then he commanded the princes of the land to support and help Solomon in building it.

David had expended a great amount of wealth and effort in preparing for the temple to be built. The gold at today's prices would be in excess of $100 billion, the silver nearly $500 million. By that alone, we see the importance that David placed upon building the temple. But how could he be sure that it would be built? If Solomon had taken all these riches after David's death and used them on himself, he probably would not have been the first son to do so, and certainly wouldn't have been the last. David knew because God told him that would happen. That's why David had gone to the effort and expense, because he knew it was a sure thing.

Wisdom

"Knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action" (dictionary.com).

Once we have the knowledge that comes from faith, we need to be able to use it. Just having knowledge doesn't mean that you'll automatically use it correctly. For example, a real man protects his home, right? Let's say that you were given knowledge that a crime gang was going to break into your house on a certain night. What would be the better choice for you – to vacate your family and have the police watch your house or to sit on your front porch with a baseball bat? If you picked the first one, we'll congratulate you for making the better choice and for displaying wisdom.

Wisdom is what helps us use the knowledge that we have acquired through faith. Both of these traits come from God and both are necessary for living a Godly life. Without wisdom, we will constantly make wrong choices even when we have correct information. The good news, however, is that as we strengthen our faith, our wisdom grows with it, because they both have the same source – God - and both are acquired the same way – by asking Him for them. *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." (James 1:5-6)*

Solomon and His Wisdom

Widely recognized as the wisest man who ever lived was Solomon. He gained his wisdom in the same way that each of us has to do it. He asked God for it. He realized that being King of Israel was a great duty and he doubted his own ability to do it well. In a dream that God sent him where He asked Solomon what he wanted from Him, Solomon said *"thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in...Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (1 Kings 3:7,9)* God was pleased with this. In fact, he was so pleased that he gave him everything that is associated with a great king: long life, riches, and power over his enemies.

We should pause and say that seeking wisdom does not guarantee these things. There are charlatans out there today claiming to be preachers and/or prophets who teach that following God is the key to prosperity and no doubt use Solomon as one of their well-worn examples of this theology. They forget about righteous Lazarus, who laid begging at the gate of the rich man, possessing sores on his body and apparently little else. They forget the suffering of Jesus on earth, though his righteousness surpasses that of us all. Don't be taken in by the fables of these people. Remember that Jabez was not asking for riches, but for the favor of God. We are to seek God and not only trust Him to distribute worldly prosperity as He sees fit, but to be content with the way that He does it.

To continue, Solomon began to reign

over Israel using these great gifts that God had bestowed upon him. His wisdom became legendary and it was good that God had blessed him with it because as king, he was called upon to make very difficult decisions not for himself, but for a great nation. Immediately after God granted his desire, he was called upon to judge between two women.

The women lived in the same house and had given birth to baby boys at about the same time. One woman, who we'll call woman A came before Solomon and told him that during the night, her housemate, who we'll call woman B, rolled over on her own child and killed it. When she saw that her child was dead, woman B switched babies with woman A and allowed her to wake up with a dead baby. Upon waking, Woman A realized that the dead baby in her bed was not her child, but woman B would not admit it, so the women took the matter to King Solomon, each of them claiming the child as her own.

Solomon called for a man with a sword and told him to cut the living child in two, giving half to each woman. Of course, he had no intention of doing this. He ordered it to watch the reactions of the two women. Woman A immediately appealed to the king to spare the child and give it to woman B, while at the same time woman B was saying that it was fine to kill the child.

Solomon then had the information that he needed to make a wise decision. He ordered that the child not be killed that it be given to woman A as she had proven herself the real mother by seeking the child's safety, even at the cost of losing it to the other woman. *"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment." (1 Kings 3:28)*

Solomon's God-given wisdom had, in his first test as King of Israel, not only sustained him, but caused word of his gift to be spread far and wide. He was visited by foreign heads of state, such as the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10) and caused the stature of Israel and knowledge of her God to be published throughout the known world of that time.

The Real Man as He Relates to Faith and Wisdom

To be a real man, a person has to be able to take action. There is much in our lives that requires us to make decisions. So often we operate as if all that we do is a roll of the dice. The fact is that the real man knows that he can know. That's not to say that he always does. But even when he doesn't, he can have faith that God will direct him where he needs it and take care of him. This faith gives him the confidence that other men just cannot have. Stepping into the darkness of the future is a scary thing, but when we know that God is watching out for us, we can do it with assurance that we'll be okay. The real man will then use the wisdom that God gives him to know the right paths to take, the right judgments to make.

Our man is becoming more and more complete as we continue. Next we'll look at zeal and leadership.

LESSON FOUR

ZEALOUSNESS AND LEADERSHIP

LESSON TEXT
1 KINGS 18:21

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Zeal is a passionate eagerness for a person or a cause. It usually engenders a desire to do whatever is necessary to promote, protect, or prosper that person or cause. It can be directed toward a good cause, such as protecting animals from abuse, or toward a bad cause, such as nazism. Even when directed toward a good cause, it can produce good actions, such as rescuing starving puppies from an abusive puppy mill, or it can produce bad actions, such as killing the owner of the puppy mill.

So we see that zeal is not so much a trait or emotion as it is a measure, albeit subjective, of degree. As temperature is to a fire, so is zeal to whatever it is applied. Zeal is not the fire, but how hot it burns. As an uncontrolled fire that is too hot can burn rather than warm, zeal that is left unchecked can have unwanted consequences.

Likewise, zeal when directed toward God and His work, requires God's leadership and direction in order to have the right actions. Peter was zealous for Jesus. When the High Priest's men came for his master, he drew his sword and cut off a man's ear (John 18:10-11; Luke 22:50-51) . Perhaps this was going too far. We get the idea from the Gospels that Peter had a tendency to impulsiveness. We also see that Jesus stopped him from doing any more harm and healed the man's ear. It's pretty clear that if Peter had asked Jesus for direction before taking action, he would have been told to do nothing, so it's safe to say that Peter's zeal was uncontrolled in this instance.

Properly constrained by being limited to what God directs however, zeal– or being on fire for Him, is a mighty force in God's service. Things that bring about zeal are commitment, love, and willingness. Things that temper zeal are faith, wisdom, and patience. Proper zeal for God is burning love for Him, a desire to go to the ends of the earth for Him and His cause, to be willing to do anything – even die – to further His work. It is also a desire to know what He wants us to do and a willingness to wait for His instruction.

Zeal is an important trait for a leader. Anyone who leads must be committed to the cause for which they are working. A leader must be so fervently attached to his cause or commander that he is willing to do whatever is required of him. Leadership can take many forms, but a leader must believe in his cause.

What is it to lead? Dictionary.com has over 50 definitions for the word "lead", so we won't try to cover all

those, but the ones we want are:
1. to go before or with to show the way; conduct or escort:
3. to influence or induce; cause:
4. to guide in direction, course, action, opinion, etc.;bring:
8. to command or direct (an army or other large organization):

The idea of leading is to get a person or group of people from where they are – physically, mentally, or spiritually - to where they need to be. Of course, "where they need to be" can be an opinion or a fact. If a person needs to be out of a burning building, then where they need to be is not a matter of opinion, but a fact. If the person who is attempting to lead is answering to a higher authority, then it's not normally up to him to make this determination. It makes it much easier to lead if the goals have already been defined.

Either way, with all the definitions above, a leader, whether self-appointed or otherwise, cannot force people to do anything. True, there have been despots, dictators, kings, emperors throughout history who have forced their will on a population, but these systems all eventually fail because they impose will rather than inspire. Besides all that, these systems are not really leadership anyway. No matter the system, a leader cannot lead without the consent of the people being led. He might be able to get them to do what he wants for a time, but they will be looking for a way to resist if they do not want what he wants.

So the successful leader must get the people that he is to lead to share his vision of where they need to be. Once this point is reached, the hard part is done. The rest is only making decisions for the next things to be done. And once the people are behind the leader and have committed to his cause, they will often help him with the decisions as well.

Leadership must also be governed and tempered using the same traits as with zeal. In a position of leadership, especially where a person has been given a large amount of trust and latitude, he must always give great care to avoid exceeding his mandate. It has been chronicled many times where a good leader was overcome with his own power and when completely out on his own, no longer taking orders or advice, allowing his cause and his followers to be destroyed or even worse, completely discredited. Because God's people have been entrusted with the most important work of all time, any of us who is called on to lead must give the utmost to make sure that we never cross the line. God's work will not be destroyed, but it must not be discredited. God help us to make sure that we never go out on our own.

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

By around 900 BC, the nation of Israel had divided into two different kingdoms: Israel, also known as the Northern Kingdom, and Judah, also known as the Southern Kingdom. Judah included the territories of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Israel took in all

the remaining tribes. Israel was cursed with evil kings who did wickedly and led the people astray.

In the late to mid 9th century BC, Ahab took the throne of Israel. We are told that he not only did evil in the sight of God, but that he was worse than any king before him. He married the daughter of the king of Sidon, Jezebel, and wholeheartedly joined her in her worship and service of Baal and other strange gods. He built an altar to Baal and built a grove, which is a wooden representation of a goddess of Sidon named Astarte. So he not only worshipped strange gods, but also enticed the people to do the same. The goal was to replace the worship of the one true God with idolatry and Israel was well on the way to that very thing happening.

But at a time when nobody else was doing it, Elijah, who was sent by God, stood up to this wickedness. In 1 Kings, chapter 17, He told Ahab that there would not be rain or even dew for three years because of where he had led the nation. He then went into hiding at the direction of God, because He knew that Ahab would blame the drought and famine on Elijah and would seek his life. God sustained Elijah for those three years while Israel got into a terrible shape.

The Challenge

At the end of the three years, God told Elijah that He would soon send rain and instructed him to go show himself to Ahab as we see in the 18th chapter. Elijah arranged through the governor of Ahab's house to meet Ahab and he showed himself to him, apparently unafraid. When Ahab asked Elijah if he was the one who troubled Israel, Elijah responded by stating that he was not, but that Ahab himself and his father's house (implying all the kings before him) were the trouble because they had forsaken God and His commandments. He then made part of a proposition to Ahab.

Elijah told Ahab to gather all the people of Israel and the prophets of Baal and to meet him at Mount Carmel, a mountain range that stretches 24 miles from the coast in the north of Samaria to the southeast. Mount Carmel was seen as a holy place. There was an altar built to God on the mountain that had fallen into ruin. Since this would be a known location and from the later description, this was probably where Elijah was arranging the meeting. Ahab, who wanted Elijah dead, was probably delighted to arrange the gathering, as it was probable that the people, who he had corrupted, would kill Elijah for him.

When everyone was gathered, Elijah came to the people and made the other part of the proposition. He chided the people for giving lip service to God while also worshiping Baal, telling them that they should make up their minds which was truly God and to follow Him. After noting that he was the only prophet of the Lord left compared to the 450 prophets of Baal, he proposed that they

conduct a showdown between their gods. The proposal was that each set of prophets would prepare an animal for sacrifice and lay it on wood, but not to light a fire. *"And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." (1 Kings 1:24)*

The people, who had experienced 3 years of drought that had not yet ended, were ready to listen. If Elijah had tried to make this deal when times were good, very few people would have listened. Being unspiritual by nature, they would have had no incentive to listen. It is a sad commentary on all of us that it takes pain to get us to even listen to reason, much less to be willing to look at the truth. As it was, God had softened their hearts by giving them hard times. *"And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." (1 Kings 1:24)*

Elijah was giving the people the choice of following God or not. This is true leadership. Elijah knew that God does not want forced compliance. He knew that the people had to be willing to follow God and that in order for that to happen, they had to be convinced. They had to want to follow Him. How many of us would have ever been saved if we had not been convinced of the need to repent to God? And who could convince us? Could someone convince us by forcing us to pray? Only God can provide the conviction that we stand in need of Him. And that is what Elijah had set the stage for. God was about to convince Israel that He was God.

The Showdown

The prophets of Baal went first. They began by calling on their god. From morning until noon, they called on him to no effect. They began to get antsy, jumping on the altar and calling out. Elijah made fun of them and their pitiful god, suggesting that maybe they should cry louder just in case he was busy or asleep. The prophets went into full frantic mode, screaming and cutting themselves and bleeding all over the place, but Baal was silent. By evening, it became apparent to all that were there that Baal was no god. He was just a large piece of metal that prophets were acting silly for.

When they had exhausted their efforts, Elijah beckoned the people to come near. *"And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down." (1 Kings 18:30)* This tells us that the location was the site of the old altar. He took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and built it. Then he dug a trench around the altar that was as wide and deep as about a bushel or two. Then he put the wood on the altar and cut the animal up and put it on the wood. He then did something very curious. He told the people to fill four barrels with water and to pour it over the animal, wood, and altar. When they were done, he had them do it two more times. By this time, the sacrifice was soaked, the wood was not fit to make a fire with, and the trench that he had dug was full of water. He wanted to make sure that no one could say that Elijah had somehow set it on fire himself.

Elijah had everything ready. He prayed aloud, saying, *"LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." (1 Kings 36-37)* After his prayer, the fire of the Lord came down and burned up everything. God burned the sacrifice and the wood, and even the stones, dirt, and water. It was all gone, completely consumed by God.

The people were overcome. They fell down and worshiped, proclaiming God to be the one true God. Elijah, in leading the people, had allowed them to decide for themselves. He knew that they would not follow until they had decided to. But now that Elijah saw that the people were following God and also him by virtue of the fact that God had sent him, he showed the depth of his zeal in what he commanded. He told the people to not let one of the prophets of Baal escape. The people, who were now followers of Elijah, did not hesitate. They killed them all, thus removing anyone who might try to lead them back to Baal.

Elijah's Zeal

How far is too far to go when contending for a righteous cause? You might be tempted to think that killing all the prophets of Baal was a very hard thing, and you would be right. It was a hard thing, but the thing obviously pleased God, who sent rain upon Israel that very day, ending the drought and marking the beginning of the end of the famine upon the land.

But the question remains. Some people have attached themselves to a cause, become convinced of its righteousness, and reason that whatever they want to do in support of that cause is justified. This of course, is absurd. This is the basis for all extremist behavior that we see in our world today. In order to reach this point, you have to throw all standards of behavior and treatment of other human beings, including those which your cause embraces, out the window.

A religion that teaches peace and kind treatment of others cannot in truth support those who would make war and kill people to further that same religion. Don't assume that we're talking just about Islam here. Much of this has been done in the name of Christianity as well. If we know God and claim kinship with his Son, we must divorce ourselves from such people. We cannot support their actions of course, but even further, we have a duty to condemn such actions as being inconsistent with true Christianity.

We should be zealous, but what

we do in our zeal must not come from our own mind, but from God. *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. " (Proverbs 3:5)* If God directs it, it will not be going too far. If God does not direct it, then we have no business being involved in it.

Elijah's Leadership

It is important to note that Elijah was not this type of leader all the time. God raised him up for the time that he was needed. Indeed, immediately after the Mount Carmel event, Elijah had fled into the wilderness and hid in a cave when he heard that Jezebel had put out an order to have him killed. Rather than looking like a leader, he was begging God to take his life because he thought he was the only one left who worshiped God.

We're pointing this out not to take away anything from Elijah. The point here is to emphasize that Elijah was just a human being and as such was prone to moments of weakness. Any human is the same, whether a leader or not. We swing like a pendulum. Close to God and strong, away from God and weak, back and forth, up and down. Elijah was a great leader, but he needed God. At this weak moment, God told him that He had yet seven thousand people who had not worshiped Baal and still clung to Him. Elijah needed this assurance. People might want to be alone from time to time, but nobody wants to be isolated.

Elijah would lead yet again, but not until God was ready for him to do it.

The Real Man as Relates to Zeal and Leadership

The real man will attach himself to God's cause through his faith and wisdom and will commit himself to furthering His work. Because of his zeal, when God chooses to raise him to a role of leadership, he will follow Him and fill that role, not taking command, but letting God be in charge.

Our man is almost finished. In the next lesson, we'll finally add courage and obedience.

LESSON FIVE

COURAGE AND OBEDIENCE

LESSON TEXT
1 Chronicles 19:13

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Courage is a most necessary trait for a real man to have. Do you see yourself as being courageous? We all want to be seen as brave, but if you don't feel like you are by today's standards, take heart. There have been many people who were obsessed with having courage for no particular reason other than to show that they had courage. There have been many who were more afraid of showing cowardice than facing death. It didn't matter what the challenge was. You could get them to do anything by threatening to call them "chicken".

The thing is that, as with the other traits that we've studied, courage is not an end unto itself. It's true that courage is "the ability and willingness to confront fear, pain, danger, uncertainty, or intimidation" (wikepedia.com). But as John F. Kennedy said, "Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction." If there's no real purpose to whatever acts of "courage" might be displayed, they are just wasted effort. It's here that we must go back and talk once more of wisdom.

Since courage misdirected is only misspent effort, we have to be able to discern where and when such acts are needed. Sometimes this is very difficult because of our natural tendencies. If a person is naturally inclined to be bold, they may be tempted to rush in where they shouldn't. If a person is perhaps more timid, they may tend to hold back when something really should be done. It's easy to let our natures tell us what to do, simply because it's natural. But we're not supposed to be driven by our natures. Romans 8:13 tells us, *"if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* Once again, if we have faith and have acquired wisdom and allow God's Spirit to guide us, we will truly know when something should and should not be done.

Still, knowing that a hard thing must be done is not the same as doing it. If it were that easy, courage would be a common thing and nothing special to be spoken of, much less having a lesson on it. Doing the right thing is often hard. Refraining from the wrong thing is difficult as well. This is where courage must come in. Courage is to our lives as a strong core is to our bodies. It helps us to stand, to work, to do the things that must be done. Having biceps strong enough to lift an anvil won't do us any good if our core muscles will not support us when lifting it. Likewise, having

strong abilities get us nowhere if we do not possess the courage and moral fiber to use them.

Courage is not to be used to make us famous or to be greatly praised as a mighty, brave man. It is to give us the strength to do the things that must be done. And as we said in the last lesson, in God's work, what must be done is not to be determined by us. It is God who directs. The real man does His bidding. This is obedience. Obedience is not taking orders as a soldier would do. It is not bending low as a slave and knuckling under.

Real obedience is for a person to change his will to match that of the one to be obeyed either because he sees in that will a better way or because he implicitly trusts the one to be obeyed. The real man doesn't follow God because he's after a reward or afraid of punishment. The real man follows God because he loves and trusts Him and knows that His will is the superior way.

The Intended End of the Road from Egypt

Everyone who has gone to Sunday school knows that the nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty long years after they left Egypt. We all know the story of how God fed them with manna and quail and how their clothes and shoes never wore out. But probably not as many know that the wandering they did for so long was not necessary.

God never intended that Israel would take so long to get to the promised land. Look at a map with Israel and Egypt on it sometime. How far is it from the Nile River to the Jordan River? Going through the Sinai and around the Dead Sea, it's about 350 miles – a long way for walking to be sure. But taking a very slow pace and not going for a long time each day would still get you there in about 2 months. Israel was at Mount Sinai for almost a year, so adding time for that, you might stretch it out to 1 and ½ years, but probably not much more than that. Even if you take a day to rest every few days, you're not going to take more than 2 years, so why 40?

God intended for Israel to go to Mount Sinai to meet with Him there so that He could covenant with the people and give them His law, and then proceed directly to the land that He had given them. Once there, the people were called upon to have courage enough to be obedient to God and His plan for them.

Joshua and Caleb – and the Rest of the Spies

Sure enough after about 2 years of travel, the congregation of Israel approached the land of Canaan. At this time, chronicled in the 13th chapter of Numbers, God told Moses to pick men to spy out Canaan, to determine the goodness of the land and to assess the strength of the Canaanite people and their defenses. So Moses picked a man from each of the twelve tribes and he also sent

Joshua with them and they left and went the way that Moses had instructed them, which is from the south, in the Wilderness of Paran (in the Sinai Peninsula).
When they reached the Brook Eshcol, somewhere in the vicinity of Hebron, they cut down one cluster of grapes that was so large, it required two men to carry it on a pole stretched between them. They also found pomegranates and figs. They continued to scout the land for 40 days and then returned to the congregation to report on what they had found.

They showed what they had found and told that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, but that is where the good news ended. They said that the Canaanites were a strong people and had great, strongly walled cities. They had seen the children of Anak there, who were known for being fierce and cruel. They named the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites – all well known as warriors. Every direction they turned in the land, there was some strong people who would oppose them. The task that lay before them, namely taking their inheritance, was daunting to say the least.

Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, was the first to propose action. He said, *"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30)* Caleb had confidence in the people of Israel to take the land, but he also had confidence in God, who was with them. His confidence in God gave him courage. He knew that Israel could go into the land and overcome all obstacles because he knew that God was with them. However, Caleb was not the only voice.

Suddenly, the men who went with him changed gears. All of a sudden, after talking of the great bounty that the land held, they said that the land was inhospitable, eating up the inhabitants. They also added that there were men there of great stature, as if there were not large men found in all lands. Then, as if they hadn't already laid it on thick enough, they added that there were giants there who were so large that they made the Israelite men look like grasshoppers. Wow! Things were going downhill quickly.

The congregation wept and mourned and turned on Moses yet another time. They once again contemplated returning to Egypt even as they stood on the threshold of their new home. Caleb, along with Joshua then appealed to the people. They said *"The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not." (Numbers 14:7-9)*

Joshua and Caleb had courage concerning taking the land that God had already given them and

they certainly needed courage to say what they did with the entire congregation in such an uproar and suffering from an extreme lack of backbone. The congregation wanted to stone them both, but God's glory, appearing in the tabernacle, prevented them from doing it. It was at this point that God told Moses that He would destroy the people and make a new, better nation from Moses. Moses begged and pleaded for God to spare Israel for fear of what people would say against God, to which God finally did relent and spared them. But there were still consequences.

God swore to the people that none of the adults who had so disobeyed Him would go into the promised land. He said that their children would, but that, except for Caleb and Joshua and their families, the carcases of all the adults in the congregation would fall in the wilderness. He said that they would all wander in the wilderness for forty years, one year for each of the 40 days that they had scouted the land.

So Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years because their courage was not sufficient. They had no reason to be afraid, but yet they were because they did not believe God. This led to the disobedience that caused them to die in the wilderness unfulfilled.

The Real Man as Relates to Courage and Obedience

The real man possesses courage, but not so that he can perform impressive feats of daring do. The real man knows that life requires him to do things, hard things. Since these things are not easy to do, he must possess the steel that will allow him to go forward when everything in him wants to run away. Possessing courage makes him ready to obey God when He has a task for him that is not easy. The real man seeks God's will and makes it his own, which gives him even more steel in his backbone. God's will must be done, no matter how hard, and he sees that and knows that he will rejoice in the end.

Our Real Man Completed

We have now finished our real man. Up to now, we've been looking at Him in pieces, so it's hard to get a good look at the overall man, but let's do that now. When we back away, we start to see them come together, each trait affecting all the others, the man becoming an integrated whole. You see, none of the traits that we've talked about can exist in a vacuum, and indeed they shouldn't. We've seen in our lessons how that faith should permeate a man's entire existence, building and adding to every other part of him. Indeed, all the virtues that make up a real man communicate with each other, radiate to all other virtues, bolstering and bracing, the whole becoming more than the sum of the parts. Don't think of these virtues as being kept in separate drawers. They are more like parts of a machine. They come together to make something that works. We are to possess these

parts not for our own edification, but to work.

Look at our man. He is Jesus! All these virtues were perfected in Him. They came together in a unified whole that was and is the ultimate expression of perfection. They came together and He performed a perfect work. He summed up His work by quoting Isaiah: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)* A large work indeed – work for a real man.

The humility of the publican was displayed when He, the very Son of God, prayed, *"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5)* He humbled himself before his fellow men when he washed the feet of His disciples, the master becoming the servant (John 13:3-17).

The patience of Job pales compared to all the things that Jesus suffered, yet bore willingly. He hints of His patience with His people when he said, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! " (Matthew 23:37)* And even as the rich young ruler arrogantly and ignorantly declared that he had kept the commandments, *"Jesus beholding him loved him" (Mark 10:21)*

The honesty and integrity of Joseph was a shadow of the same things in Jesus. How often did Jesus speak the truth, even when it was painful and carried the threat of retaliation? When he spoke to the scribes and pharisees; when he stood before the Jewish council; when he stood before Pilate. When Jesus was tempted by Satan under conditions that would not just weaken, but kill us, He withstood him and retained His integrity.

To speak of a single instance of faith on Jesus' part would imply over importance on that one event, but not one rose higher than another. Jesus was the epitome of living by faith. We see faith in all that He did. He stated it plainly when He said *"I and my Father are one." (John 10:30)* His wisdom is in the parables that He used to teach, the words that He used to encourage and to rebuke, the probing, insightful questions that He asked, and the means that He used to accomplish His mission.

The zeal of Jesus was clearly seen when He drove the merchants from the Temple of God (John, chapter 2). His fervent desire for God's work caused Him to go all the way in all that He did. He did not hesitate to approach people, but went to some fishermen and told them "Follow me, and

I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) He led, and still leads, by teaching, showing, demonstrating and by earning the love and devotion of His followers. He also showed great leadership by communing with and following His Father, to whom He answered.

Finally, Jesus demonstrated the highest courage by submitting to His Father and being obedient to His final requirement of Him. It is obvious from Jesus' prayer in Luke 22:42, that He himself was in dread of what was in store for Him: *"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me..."*. But in the finish of His prayer, we see His obedience: *"nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."* We then see His courage in actually going through with what He knew awaited Him. It wasn't that He wanted to suffer. It wasn't that He wanted to prove that He was the bravest of all. It was that He knew that it had to be done.

So He did it. He humbled Himself and bore the shame and pain with patience. He kept His integrity by fulfilling His promise. He had faith in His Father that all would be made right by His righteous sacrifice and wisely held tight to the promise. The zeal of being all in for a plan that would accomplish His Father's goal of redeeming mankind made Him go all the way to the cross and by His example, He leads us yet today. He obeyed the Father and with strength He went through with bearing the sins of us all. He finished His work perfectly!

So Jesus was our real man, and still is. Death did not change Him. As He sits on the right hand of His Father today, He is every bit as human as He is God. He is our example. He knows what we go through. He went through everything that we do and more, yet He remained a real man. He was the example for the men that we've studied. And we see that truly, to be a real man is to follow Him.

NO CHARGE FOR DOWNLOAD/PRINTING